



The Meaning of Tawhīd ¹

Imām Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalānī

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The orthodox `ulemā explained *tawhīd* to be the repudiation of the notion that Allāh has any attribute which resembles the attributes of created things (*tashbīh*), and of the notion that He does not possess those transcendent attributes which His perfection and majesty require (*ta'tīl*).

That is why al-Junayd in a report transmitted by al-Qushayrī [in his *al-risāla*] said:

“*Al-tawhīd* consists in maintaining the uniqueness of the Unoriginated (*qadīm*) with respect to the originated (*ḥādīth*).”

Abū Qāsim al-Tamīmī said in his book *al-hujjah*:

“*Al-tawhīd* is the verbal noun (*masdar*) from which the past verb *wahhada*, and the present verb *yūwahhidū* are derived. The meaning of the sentence *wahbadtū Allāh is i'taqitū Allāh munfaridan* [that is, I declared categorically that Allāh is unique in His person (*dhāt*), and that in respect of His attributes (*ṣifāt*) He has no likeness nor resemblance.] However, it has also been said that it means: ‘I acknowledge that He is one’, and likewise, that it means: ‘I deny Him all quality and quantity; for He is one in His Essence, indivisible; and one in His attributes; there is nothing which is like Him. He has no associate in His divinity, dominion, and providence. There is no other Lord than He, and no other Creator.’”

Ibn Battāl said:

“The title that al-Bukhārī has given the chapter [in his Hadīth collection called *al-ṣaḥīḥ*] implies that Allāh is not a corporeal body because a corporeal body is composed of things and formed. And in this [section] there contains a refutation against the Jahmiyya in their claim that Allāh is a corporeal body...”

¹ Ibn Hajar, *fath al-bārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma`rifa) vol. 14, p. 344

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This is how it was found and perhaps he meant to say the anthropomorphists. As for the Jahmiyya, no one who has composed works on the [beliefs of the sects] differed in [the opinion] that they [the Jahmiyya] denied the attributes to the point where they were ascribed with denial (*ta`til*). It has been established from Abū Hanīfa that he said:

“Jahm [ibn Safwān] exaggerated in negating resemblance to the point that he said that Allāh is nothing.”

